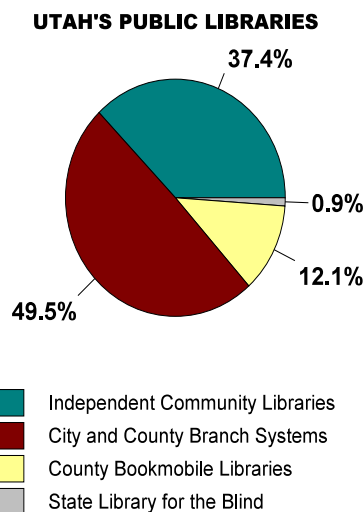




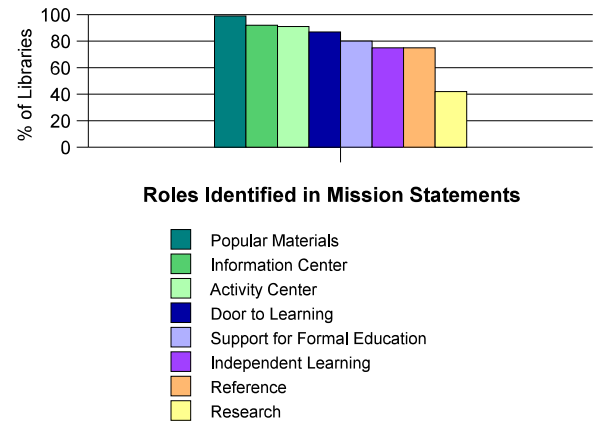
UTAH'S LIBRARIES: A PROFILE

Utah has more than a hundred public library facilities. More than forty local governments (cities and counties) provide library services to their residents through a single, independent community library. Salt Lake City and nine counties (Davis, Emery, Salt Lake, San Juan, Summit, Tooele, Uintah, Washington, and Weber) have multi-branch library systems that serve patrons through an aggregate total of 53 branch facilities. Thirteen bookmobile libraries (each consisting of a mobile unit and a fixed facility) deliver services within 22 of the state's rural counties. Eleven of the 13 fixed bookmobile facilities offer public access to the collections and the Internet. In addition, the State Library Division operates a central library that provides direct services to blind and visually and physically impaired patrons. The total number of public libraries varies depending



on what is being counted. In some cases (such as the Panguitch City / Garfield County Public Library) two administrative units share a single library building and governance board. One facility is used seasonally. For this study, we are using a total of 107 – the number of public library buildings. Unless otherwise noted, this figure provides the basis for all data calculations.

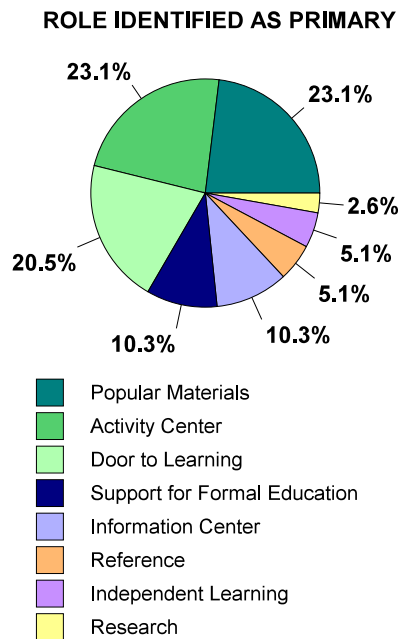
PUBLIC LIBRARY ROLES



LIBRARY ROLES AND MISSIONS

Public library services can be generally classified in eight categories:

- ❖ providing current high-demand, high interest popular materials in a variety of formats for persons of all ages
- ❖ providing current information about community organizations, issues, and services.
- ❖ serving as a focal point for community activities, meetings, and services
- ❖ encouraging young children to develop an interest in reading and learning
- ❖ helping students of all ages to meet educational objectives established by formal courses of study
- ❖ providing sustained learning programs independent of other educational providers
- ❖ providing general reference information to meet community needs
- ❖ providing resources for in-depth research and study



Most of Utah's public libraries have a mandate to provide all or most of these services, but vary in the mix of programs they offer and in the relative priorities they accord to each role. In their mission statements, the majority describe their primary role as one of three: providing popular materials, serving as a door to learning for young children, or creating an activity center for the community.

LIBRARY PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

As these roles suggest, the 21st century public library is much more than a storehouse of books and information materials. In addition to circulating and reference collections, Utah's public libraries offer a diverse range of programs and services to support their missions and address the specific needs and desires of the communities they serve.

Virtually all offer special programs, displays, and activities for children, often targeted by age group. These programs are typically heavily attended, offered in multiple sessions, and filled to – or beyond

– capacity. Weekly story hours, summer reading programs, and activity sessions are a fixture at most public libraries. Many offer special holiday programs throughout the year, as well as special events like Dr. Seuss's birthday party, a sleep-over in the library, puppetry, and crafts.

For young adults, Utah's public libraries provide a variety of study and discussion groups, as well as instruction in the use of library materials and electronic resources.

Adult programming includes lectures, readings, author sessions, and discussion groups.

To meet the information needs of the 21st century, libraries offer all patrons access to computer equipment and to electronic resources including Internet access, CD-ROMs, and electronic databases. Many libraries sponsor classes in computer use, the Internet, and computer research. A significant number provide separate computer services and training for children. Many offer courses in specific computer skills such as word-processing, desk-top publishing, and web-site development.

Some have additional services, such as copy centers, available to meet patron needs. Many maintain local history collections, art exhibits, community displays, and public services such as tax preparation assistance. Most offer tours and orientation sessions for school groups. The county bookmobile libraries provide mobile service to rural communities.

OTHER ACTIVITIES IN UTAH'S LIBRARIES

As extensive as the programs sponsored by Utah's public libraries are, they represent only a fraction of the activities that occur at public library facilities. The state's public libraries also host an array of programs and events sponsored by local individuals, groups, and organizations. In most communities, library space can be scheduled after hours and is heavily used.

21st Century Library Needs Assessment

LIBRARY MISSIONS AND SERVICES IN UTAH



Libraries host art exhibits and musical concerts. Some provide stages for dramatic presentations. Many allocate space to literacy programs run by other groups; some libraries sponsor and run the literacy programs themselves. In some communities, the library has become a center where seniors can come for meals, health screening, and daily activities.

The roster of groups that rely on local libraries for meeting space includes virtually every organization in the state. Libraries provide a focal point for scout programs, service organizations, community councils, educational activities, and, in some cases, private gatherings. In some communities, the public library has the only non-sectarian meeting room, or the only one available at no cost to non-profit groups. Even in communities that have other appropriate meeting facilities available, many groups prefer to meet at the library because holding events there tends to increase public participation.

